

### **REMARKS**

In the April 7, 2003 Office Action, all of the claims 1-10 and 12-20 stand rejected in view of prior art. Claims 6-8, 10, 11 and 15-21 also were rejected for failing to indicate and claim particularly and distinctly the subject matter that Applicant regards as the invention. Claims 11 and 21 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

#### ***Status of Claims and Amendments***

In response to the April 7, 2003 Office Action, Applicant has amended the specification and claim 16 as indicated above. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his thorough examination and the indication of allowable subject matter. Thus, claims 1-21 are pending, with claims 1, 12 and 15 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

#### ***Drawings***

Applicant has amended Figure 4 in view of the amendment to claim 16. Applicant has filed herewith a Request for Approval of Proposed Drawing Corrections. More specifically, Figure 4 has been amended to add a referential numeral "15a," which indicates the outer peripheral surface of the spool shaft 15. Applicant believes that the drawings all comply with 37 CFR §1.83(a).

#### ***Specification***

Applicant has amended the specification to provide proper antecedent basis for the limitations of claim 16. Applicant believes that the specification is correct and complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1).

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §112***

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 6-8, 10, 11 and 15-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Office Action's assertion that claims 6-8, 10, and 11 are indefinite. Also, Applicant has amended claim 16 to clarify the language of claim 15.

Specifically, Applicant believes that the languages "said first component having a pressing member" and "said second component having a rod member" in claim 6 are fully supported by the specification. Although the pressing member 36 is defined as "an example of a first component" in the specification (page 7, lines 11-12), Applicant does not intend to

limit the scope of the claim 6 to such structure. In other words, the language of claim 6 is worded such that the first component can include a member or a portion other than the pressing member. Nonetheless, Applicant believes the language "said first component having a pressing member" in claim 6 is fully supported by the specification, because the first component does include a pressing member when the first component is the pressing member. The same argument is also applicable to the second component and the rod member. Therefore, Applicant believes that claims 6-8, 10, and 11 are not indefinite.

Applicant has also amended claim 16 to recite that the second component is an outer peripheral surface of the spool shaft. Clearly, the outer peripheral surface of the spool shaft is attached to the spool shaft. Accordingly, Applicant believes that claims 15-21 are not indefinite.

Applicant believes that the claims now comply with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

***Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103***

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-10 and 12-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,176,446 to Sato ("Sato patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,164,577 to Koike ("Koike patent"). In response, Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

More specifically, the Office Action asserts that the spool shaft 15, the seal 34, and the bearing 35 of the Sato patent form the water sealing component assembly of claims 1, 12 and 15. The Office Action further asserts that the film layer 14 of the Koike patent corresponds to the water repelling film layer of claims 1, 12 and 15. Applicant believes that the Sato patent and the Koike patent do not anticipate the arrangement of claims 1, 12 and 15 either singularly or in combination.

First of all, Applicant believes that it would not occur to one ordinarily skilled in the art to combine the teachings of the Sato patent and the Koike patent. The Sato patent discloses a conventional sealing member 34, which is made of resin. The film layer 14 of the Koike patent is a layer formed by metal plating. *See* column 3, lines 34-40, column 4, lines 41-49. As discussed in column 2, lines 6-10 of the Koike patent, the metal plating film of the Koike patent is described as a surface treatment of a spool. If the film layer 14 were to be applied in the structure of the Sato patent so as to achieve the arrangement of claim 1, the film layer 14 would have to be applied to either the sealing member 34 or the outer periphery

of the spool shaft 15. Applicant believes that it would not occur to one ordinarily skilled in the art to apply the metal plating of the Koike patent to either the sealing member 34 or the spool shaft 15 of the Sato patent, because neither the sealing member 34 nor the spool shaft 15 has an external surface. It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does *not* make the modification obvious, unless the prior art *suggests* the desirability of the modification. Therefore, Applicant believes that the combination of teachings of the Sato patent and the Koike patent is improper.

Even assuming *arguendo* that the combination of the Sato patent and the Koike patent were proper, Applicant believes that the Sato patent and the Koike patent do not anticipate or render obvious the arrangement of claims 1, 12 and 15. More specifically, although the Koike patent discloses that the film layer 14 has corrosion resistance, there is no disclosure or suggestion that the film layer 14 is water repelling as required by claims 1, 12 and 15. Generally, corrosion resistance or corrosion protection means “[t]he minimization of corrosion by coating with a protective metal, with an oxide or phosphide or similar substance, or with a protective paint, or by rendering the metal passive,”<sup>1</sup> while water-repellent means “[being] treated with a finish that is resistant but not impervious to penetration by water.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, corrosion resistance is the ability to resist corrosion, while the water repellency is the ability to resist the penetration of water. Although a water-repellant surface may be better able to resist corrosion, an anti-corrosive surface does not necessarily have water repellency. Thus, the fact that the film layer 14 of the Koike patent possesses corrosion resistance does not necessarily mean that the film layer 14 also possesses water repellency as well. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in the Koike patent that the film layer 14 has water repellency. Therefore, Applicant believes that the Sato patent and the Koike patent do not disclose or suggest the water repelling film layer of claims 1, 12 and 15 as filed, whether singularly or in combination.

With regard to claims 2-10, 13-14 and 16-20, they depend from claims 1, 12 and 15, and therefore are narrower. Since claims 1, 12 and 15 as filed are not disclosed or suggested by the Sato patent and the Koike patent, Applicant believes that dependent claims 2-10, 13-14 and 16-20 cannot be disclosed or suggested by the prior art record.

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<sup>1</sup> MCGRAW-HILL DICTIONARY OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL TERMS 467 (Sybil P. Parker ed. McGraw-Hill Inc. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. 1993).

<sup>2</sup> MERRIAM WEBSTER’S COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY 1336 (Merriam-Webster, Inc. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. 1997).

In view of the above comments, Applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

On pages 5-6 of the Office Action, claims 11 and 21 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Since Applicant believes that claims 1 and 15 as filed are allowable, and also since the rejections to claims 11 and 21 are overcome, Applicant believes that claims 11 and 21 continue to be allowable.

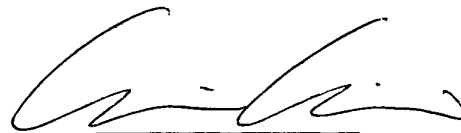
***Prior Art Citation***

In the Office Action, additional prior art references were made of record. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-21 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: Jun/26/03

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